

FACT SHEET
U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE
STATE TRADE AND EXPORT PROMOTION (STEP) PROGRAM

- The STEP Program is a pilot Federal-state partnership initiative, intended to increase the number of small businesses that export and the value of exports by the small business sector.
- The Program was authorized by the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, funded at \$30 million per year for the first two rounds, and \$8 million for the third round. Under it, competitive awards can be made to the 50 states, District of Columbia, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands.
- Export activities conducted by states to assist ‘eligible small business concerns’ under the Program include participation in foreign trade missions and market sales trips, subscription to services provided by the Department of Commerce, design of international marketing products and campaigns, export trade show exhibits, training, and other efforts aligned with Program goals.
- Under the Program, the Federal government provides 75% of the funding required for the total project, and states provide 25%, in most cases. For high export states in terms of total value of exports, the Federal government provides 65% of funding and these states provide 35%.
- The first round of competitive STEP awards was made in September 2011, for performance during the period October 2011 to September 2012. In this round, SBA made 51 awards totaling \$29 million. The average award amount was \$568k.
- The second round of competitive STEP awards was made in September 2012, for performance during the period October 2012 to September 2013. In this round, SBA made 52 awards totaling \$30 million. The average award amount was \$577k.
- The third round of competitive STEP awards was made in September 2014, for performance during the period October 2014 to September 2015. In this round, SBA made 24 awards totaling \$8 million. The average award amount was \$332k. Individual state awards varied based upon each state’s approved project plan and budget.